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Stone accepts French Order

By Pia Farrell

PARIS — Oliver Stone took time off from his whirlwind "JFK" European promotional tour to pick up France's Order of Arts and Letters Award.

French cultural minister Jack Lang presented Stone with the prestigious award on the eve of the "JFK" opening in Paris on Wednesday.

Stone, whose mother is French, was whisked from one TV talk show to another, all the time chatting vehemently in nearly flawless French about such complicated subjects as the "balle magique" that struck President John F. Kennedy and Texas Gov. John Connally.

Like their counterparts elsewhere, the liberal French press greeted the film with a great deal of skepticism and criticized Stone for not offering hard proof to back his conspiracy theory. Critics all agreed though that the acting, pacing and cinematography is top-notch.

The picture is starting strong at the boxoffice but hasn't been able to edge ahead of Jean-Jacques Annaud's "L'Amant."

"JFK" scored 16,149 admissions in the Paris area on its first day of release, against 18,800 for "L'Amant" on the same day in its second week of release. "JFK" is playing at 36 screens in Paris, against 48 for "L'Amant." □